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tiny sculptures used to secure pouches to the kimono--have long been an obsession for collectors in both East and West. They depict a variety of figures, both domestic and exotic, from marketplace tradesmen to otherworldly beings to perfectly rendered animals. This superbly illustrated, accessibly written volume examines netsuke in the context of Japanese life and details the origins of designs that have evolved through the centuries. It delves into the minds of the artists and explores the question of the objects' use, both functional and symbolic.